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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MEPI - ARABIC BOOK TRANSLATION PROGRAM, AMEMBASSY
SANAA PARTICIPATION

REF: STATE 145089

1. Post requests inclusion in the Arabic Book Translation Program.

Answers to Questions

2. PAO, John Balian, recently spoke with officials from the Ministry of Education regarding the proposed project.

3. MOE officials were enthusiastic about the program and promised cooperation with Amembassy Sanaa in planning and implementation of the project.

4. Post will work with appropriate host government officials so that schools are ready to participate in the initial pilot project to be launched in Fall 2003.

5. Host country is receptive to participating in both the primary school and (future) upper grade programs.

6. Post believes that the classroom library set-up will be effective.

7. Although the MOE does not have sufficient funds to offer financial buy-in to the project, MOE is fully prepared to work with Amembassy Sanaa in school selection and other forms of cooperation necessary to make the project successful.

8. Post does not currently know the number of schools that could be impacted by the initial roll-out of the program but due to the desperate need of additional educational/reading materials in the country's school system, the future impact of the program could be impressive.

9. There is no local facility that can be used for printing of the books.

10. Post would work with media outlets in Yemen, in cooperation with the ROYG to insure wide-spread media coverage in all of the areas where the program is implemented.

11. The USG's profile in the roll-out of the program should be high once books are actually donated to schools and classroom libraries are established.

Education in Yemen

12. Basic education and literacy is a fundamental component of Post's MEPI strategy as there are many areas of education that need to be addressed in Yemen. Only half of all Yemeni children aged 6 to 11 enroll in schools, the literacy rate, especially in the rural areas, is as high as 91 percent for married women, and teachers often have minimum qualifications. The 2000/1 Education Survey estimated that only 60 percent of teachers have just basic education, or at most, one to two years of secondary school.

13. Education has not historically been considered essential among many Yemenis. However, the Yemeni Government is working to improve the educational system. The ROYG Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper states that education is a key factor in creating sustainable economic and social development. The education strategy in Yemen focuses on improving the quality of education, improving the management of the educational system, giving priority to basic education and focusing on girls' education.

14. The Arabic Book Translation Program will work to help the ROYG meet these objectives and will help meet some of the education needs of the country, especially in rural areas where illiteracy is most prevalent.

MISENHEIMER